



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

F  
869  
.S423  
.081

STANFORD  
LIBRARIES

O'SULLIVAN  
LITTLE CHAPTERS  
ABOUT SAN JUAN  
CAPISTRANO



# Little Chapters About



San Juan Capistrano



**Little Chapters About  
San Juan Capistrano.**

---



*Twentieth Edition*

**STANFORD  
LIBRARIES**

Copyrighted, 1912

by

St. John O'Sullivan, San Juan Capistrano, Calif.

Published by permission of authority.

---

2569  
S423 C81

To the memory of  
Fray Vicente Fuster  
Fray Josef Barona  
and  
Fray Vicente Pascual de Oliva  
whose unmarked graves lie somewhere  
within the ruins of the Mission,  
these little chapters  
are reverently  
dedicated





---

## **Forward**

This booklet contains information about the Mission San Juan Capistrano. It is not intended as a comprehensive history of the Mission, but merely a handbook for those, who wish to know something of its story, and especially those who visit the place.

**ST. J. O'S.**

**San Juan Capistrano, Cal.,  
June 19, 1912.**



## CHAPTER I

### *The Place.*

**T**HIS Mission of San Juan Capistrano, with the little town bearing the same name, is situated in Orange County, California, fifty-six miles south of Los Angeles, on the Santa Fe Railway. It stands about a mile above the confluence of two streams which flow through narrow valleys skirted by lomas, as the rather high and rounded hills are called by the people here, for Spanish is still the prevailing language of the place.

The stream from the north, which runs on the west side of the Mission, is the Trabuco, and that from the northeast, which comes down the

---

---

Mision Vieja Cañon and crosses the Camino Real about a mile south of the Mission, is known as the San Juan. Consequently the Mission stands between these two streams, so that its gardens, vineyards and orchards had a plentiful supply of water from both of them, partly by means of zanjás, or open ditches, and partly by underground waterways, fragments of which may still be seen leading from the separate streams. The distance to the Pacific Ocean is about two and a half miles, and the opening formed by the valley at the Ocean is called La Boca de la Playa. A few miles up the coast, there is a high cliff overlooking a narrow sandy beach. This spot was formerly called El Embarcadero Viejo, but from the circumstance of Richard H. Dana's experience there, as described in his "Two Years Before the Mast," when hides from the Mission were thrown over the cliffs to be brought out in small boats to the ships, the place has come to be known as "Dana's Point."

This region was formerly inhabited by Indians who called themselves Acagchemem, and the place Acagcheme. Father Junípero Serra calls the place Quanís-savit, but this probably refers to the original location of the Mission, six miles up the Mision Vieja Cañon. When an Indian became formally associated with the Mission, which took place at his baptism, he came to be

---

known as a San Juanefio or Mission Indian connected with San Juan Capistrano.

The Mission was named after San Juan Capistrano, or St. John, native of Capistrano, which is a town in the Abruzzi, in Italy. Born in 1385, he became a Franciscan priest, and being noted for his zeal and eloquence, was chosen as preacher in the army of Hunyadi, and was present at the siege of Belgrade. Consequently his statue in the Church of the Mission shows him in a semi-military habit. He died in 1456. There is another mission bearing his name near San Antonio, in Texas.

The first founding of this Mission took place on October 30, 1775, the octave of the feast of San Juan Capistrano, when mass was celebrated in a mere shelter of boughs, by Fray Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, who had come up from San Diego, accompanied by Lieut. José Francisco de Ortega, one sergeant, and a few soldiers. Eight days afterwards, news arrived from San Diego of the destruction of the Mission there by the Indians, and giving orders to bury the bells, Fr. Lasuen returned to San Diego with Lieut. Ortega and his men.

Local tradition at San Juan says that this first founding took place six miles up the Mision Vieja Cañon, where the remains of a large building of adobes may still be seen. The following year

---

Father Serra with Fathers Amurrio and Mugartegui and eleven soldiers came from San Diego to begin again the work that had been interrupted, and finding the cross of the year before still standing, formally founded a second time the Mission on November 1, 1776, which thus became the seventh in order of establishment. The first in Upper California was begun at San Diego, on July 16, 1769.

Father Serra then went to Mission San Gabriel to send cattle and neophytes to assist in the building of the Mission, but before leaving he made several entries in the record books of the new establishment. The following is a translation of his entry in the record of deaths:

“Praised be Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

“In this book are the death entries of the Mission San Juan Capistrano, of Quanís-savit, belonging to the Apostolic College of San Fernando, Mexico, of missionaries of the Order of our holy Father, St. Francis, of the (regular) observance, founded by the religious of the said Apostolic College at the expense of the Catholic Monarch of the Spains and the Indies, Señor Don Carlos III, whom may God prosper many years; the funds supplied by order and direction of his excellency, Señor Fray Don Antonio Maria Bucareli y Ursua, Knight and Baylio of the Order of St John, Lieut. General of the Royal Armies, Viceroy, Governor



**MONUMENT TO FATHER SERRA AT SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO**  
Dedicated November 24, 1914, the 201st anniversary of his birth  
Erected by the author of this booklet

---

and Captain General of this New Spain, etc., and eminent promoter of these new establishments, begun on the most solemn day of All Saints, Nov. 1, 1776, on which I, the undersigned, president of these new missions of the infidels for the said Apostolic College, conjointly with the Father Procurator, Fray Gregorio Amurrio, having implored the divine aid and made the usual blessings of water, place, cross and bells, sang Mass and declared the mission as begun, for the administration of which I left assigned as its first ministers the Rev. Lector, Fray Pablo de Mugartegui and the aforementioned Father Procurator, Fray Gregorio de Amurrio, both of the holy province of Cantabria, and Preachers Apostolic of the aforesaid College of San Fernando, Mexico.

“Junípero Serra”

---

## CHAPTER II

### *The Establishment*

The establishment was not, as many suppose, a monastery; it was the headquarters for the Indians in the work of civilizing them,—teaching them the Christian religion and useful industries. There were never more than two padres at a time stationed at the Mission and these had full charge of the administration, both of the Christian instruction and the industrial training. A glance over the place

will show how admirably it was planned for its purpose. Besides the church for instruction and worship, and the living rooms of the padres, and the guests' rooms, there were storehouses for provisions and shops for the various craftsmen. While a few servants and workmen lived in the Mission, the great body of Indians, of whom in 1786 there were already 544, lived in small adobe houses which clustered about the plaza of the pueblo in front of the buildings. The large rooms at the north side of the patio and in the north-east corner were the storehouses for wheat, barley, hides, tallow and other provisions. In the northwest corner were located the shops in which soap, candles, blankets, hats, harness and shoes were made. In the southwest corner, near the quarters where the children were housed, there was a large, flat roof for the drying of fruit, such as apples and grapes, but nothing now remains of it. In the front building was situated the kitchen of the padres and other occupants of the Mission building, with its vaulted roof supporting the old chimney which still stands as the quaintest and most attractive object at the Mission. Next to the kitchen, to the east, was the pantry, or dispensa, where the old hand-hewn shelves made of hard-wood, and the gallery still stand in place. The tule and rawhide construction of the ceiling may be seen in this room. The passage-way next to the pantry is called the



---

Saguan, which is now the principal entrance to the patio within, but the main entrance, of which only tradition now remains, was situated at the southwest corner just beyond the end of the broken arch.

---

### CHAPTER III

#### *The Material*

The materials used in constructing the Mission were boulders, adobe, sandstone, wood and iron, beside the tile, mortar and rawhide. Boulders were used as foundations for the adobe walls, which range from two to seven feet in thickness. Sandstone was used as lintels in the Mission building, and as keystones and skewbacks in some of the arches. All of the big church, with its adjoining sacristy, was of the same material. It was procured in Mision Vieja, about six miles northeast of San Juan. All the smaller stones were carried by the Indian neophytes, men, women and children. Each one walked bearing a stone from the quarry in the hands or upon the head—the children with small ones, the grown-ups with larger ones, all doing their part according to their strength, so that during the work the place resembled a great ant-hill with the busy workers going and

---

coming—those passing to the east empty-handed, and those coming to the west bearing their burdens. The large stones were conveyed in carretas, or bull-carts. These were fitted with either two or four wheels and the cattle wore the yoke upon the horns.

Iron was used in the buildings for window-bars, railings, hinges, locks, bolts and nails. The tile, both the square kind that are in the floors of the corridor, the oblong that are in the columns and arches and the floor of the old church, the diamond-shaped ones in that of the big church, and the roof tile were made on the hillside just north of the Mission where the remains of the kilns may still be seen. The little valley there between the lomas is called La Cañada del Orno, or the little cañon of the oven.

Sycamore logs for the beams and rafters were brought down from the Cañon of the Trabuco, and some from the side of Saddle-back Mountain, twenty miles away. The limestone for the mortar was procured from a quarry near El Toro, and undoubtedly some of the stone for the walls of the big church were brought from the rocky point at the ocean, now called San Juan Point.

The ceilings were made by plastering upon tule, which was laid upon hand-hewn rafters, and bound to them and woven together by means of rawhide strips.

---

## CHAPTER IV

### *Church Buildings*

At the Mission there have been various buildings used for divine service. The oldest one used for that purpose and which still stands is the long building, 115 feet in length, on the east side of the patio commonly known as "Serra's Church". This is probably the oldest part of the Mission. It was used for divine services before the completion of the big stone church, on September 7, 1806, and after its destruction, on December 8, 1812, but ceased to be used about the year 1890, when the present chapel was put in condition for use and the objects moved into it from the old church. The present church was not originally intended for a church or even a chapel, but was the quarter occupied by the living rooms of the two fathers in charge. The south end of the chapel was the room occupied by Fray Gerónimo Boscana, who wrote, most probably in that very room, a historical account of the origin, customs and traditions of the Indians at the Mission, whom he calls the Acagchemem Nation. The fourth place of worship was a chapel for the accommodation of the sick, and stood some fifty feet from the north wall of the building that lines the north side of the patio, between it and the infirmary, which was situated a little beyond. Nothing now remains of this chapel except a few broken tile, which can be

---

seen scattered about the field. Before the building of this, a room of the infirmary which stood near the road that passes in the rear of the Mission, a part of El Camino Real, was used as a chapel for the sick. The first chapel of all was probably a mere ramada, or rude little hut made of boughs.

Most of the objects in the present church were used in the great stone church before it fell, in 1812. In the earthquake which destroyed it, only the nave was shaken down, thus leaving the transept and sanctuary intact, so that the statues, pictures, candlesticks and other objects there were uninjured and have been preserved. The old statues are all carved from wood, and were brought from Spain for the Missions. The old manner of coloring may be seen in the statue of St. Dominic, who is recognized by the rosary he holds in his hand. The other statues are: The Blessed Virgin, upon her altar, San Juan Capistrano, in his military-religious habit, bearing a sword and banner, and St. Mary Magdalene, holding the nails of the crucifixion in her right hand. The statue of St. Antony on the side altar, opposite the entrance, was originally a San Juan Capistrano, as may readily be judged from the character of the habit he wears and the attitude of the figure. The little Madonna and Child on the wall at the epistle side of the sanctuary is the best preserved and most beautiful of all the statues.



Mission San Juan Capistrano before the Earthquake of 1812

---

---

The Stations of the Cross, of which the twelfth is missing, are undoubtedly Spanish paintings of the 18th Century. The large picture of the crucifixion over the altar is signed "Francisco Cervantes 1800." The figures in the picture, besides that of our dying Saviour, are, of course, His holy Mother on the left, St. John the Evangelist on the right, and St. Mary Magdalene kneeling at the foot of the cross.

The white-metal candlesticks are all of silver, as are also the frames of the altar-cards, bookstand, processional cross, and the two large torches. The six silver candlesticks on the altar of the Blessed Virgin are especially to be noted for their simple and beautiful design.

The sacristy, which is not open to visitors, contains the Mission vestment-case with many old vestments which are still in use, the baptismal font, a painting of San Juan Capistrano, a bell-wheel and various other relics of the early mission days.

---

## CHAPTER V

### *The Stone Church*

The church of this mission before its destruction by earthquake, in 1812, was the most magnificent of all the mission churches of California. The workmanship may be judged from the carved pilasters, cornices, capitals, doorways, arches and

---

keystones that still remain. The roof was a series of domes, or bovedas, seven in number, one of which still stands over the sanctuary. Local tradition says that the bell tower in front was so high that it could be seen from a point ten miles away to the north, called Los Alisos, a short distance southwest of El Toro, and that the sound of the bells was carried even farther, that upon top of the tower perched a gilded cock, and that above the dome, over the transept, rose a narrow spire of the large, square mission tile, or ladrillos.

The great church was used only six years and three months, for on the 8th of December, 1812, the tower and nave were destroyed by an earthquake. There is an entry in one of the record books of the mission relating to the building of the church, of which the following is a translation: "The church of this Mission (was) built by its neophytes at the expense of their application and labor. It is all of lime and stone, with the vaults of the same material, and with a transept. It was begun on the 2nd day of February, in the year 1797, the day dedicated to the solemnity of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, and finished in the year 1806. It was blessed on the evening of the 7th of September of this same year by the Rev. Fray Estevan Tapis, Preacher Apostolic of the College of San Fernando, Mexico, and President of these Missions of New or Alta California, with

---

the assistance of the Rev. Fathers, Fray José de Miguel, and Fray José Antonio de Urrestí, of the holy Province of Cantabria, Missionaries Apostolic of the said College and Ministers of the neighboring Mission of San Gabriel Archangel; of the Rev. Father, Fray Marcos Antonio de Victoria, son of the same Province of Cantabria, member of the said College and Minister of the Mission of Santa Barbara; of the Rev. Father, Fray José Zalvidea, son of the said Province, member of the same College, and Minister of the Mission of San Fernando, King of Spain; of the Rev. Father, Fray Antonio Peirí, son of the holy Province of Cataluña, member of the same College, and Minister of the neighboring Mission of San Luis, King of France; of the Rev. Father, Fray Pedro de la Cueva, son of the holy Province of Extramadura (infra Tagum) member of the same College, and ex-minister of the Mission of San José; of the ministers of this Mission, Fray Juan Norberto de Santiago, native of the town of Samiano, Earldom of Treviño, in the Province of Alabá, son in religion of the Province of Cantabria, and member of the same College; and of Fray José Faura, a native of Barcelona, Capital of the Principality of Cataluña, son in religion of the Province of the same name, and member of the College above mentioned. There assisted also at the blessing Señor Jose Juaquin de Arrillaga,



Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Armies, and at present Governor of this Province of Alta California Don Miguel Rodriguez, Captain of the company of cavalry, and of the Presidio of our Father San Francisco, and at present commander of the Presidio of San Diego; Don Francisco Maria Ruiz, Lieutenant of the Presidiary Company of San Diego; Don Juaquin Mastorina, Alferez of the Company of the Presidio of Santa Barbara, and many members of this company. There assisted also many persons *de razon*, many neophites from the neighboring missions, and others, together with all the neophites of this mission. On the day following, the 8th of September, a solemn Mass was celebrated, being sung by Fray Marcos Victoria, and the sermon was preached by Father Urrestí."

---

## CHAPTER VI

### *The Disaster*

In the records of the Mission, the only entry relating to the destruction of the big stone church by earthquake simply states that it fell during the first Mass on the 8th of December, 1812, and that on the two days following, thirty-nine bodies which had been taken out of the ruins were buried in the cemetery.

The day was the Feast of the Immaculate Con-

---

ception of the Blessed Virgin, and the Father had previously announced that the first Mass on that day was to be celebrated for the convenience of the grown people. For this reason, no children were in the church when it fell.

It was probably toward the end of the service, for the bells in the tower were ringing to announce the next Mass, when the assembled worshipers felt the ground tremble and saw the walls and roof swaying back and forth. The domes in the rear of the church cracked open and parted so that the sky was seen through the crevices. Then the edges came together and the stones began to fall. When the priest at the altar noticed the earthquake and the commotion of the people, he turned toward them and beckoned to them with both hands to come forward into the sanctuary. Many rushed thither and were saved. Others tried to escape through the doors at the rear and west side of the church, but the movement of the walls had fastened the doors in place so firmly that they could not be opened, and as a consequence most of those who met their death were caught under the falling domes just at the doorways. Up in the tower two boys were ringing the bells, and both perished, but the body of at least one of them was never found. The tower fell southward, away from the church, and the stones were scattered over the whole length of the plaza of the town in front.

Two days afterwards, the workers among the debris heard a groan, and clearing away the stones and mortar from the place, found a woman crouched down between two large stones that had fallen together like the letter A, so as to form a protecting shield for her against the great heap of material above. She was taken out alive and recovered from the shock of her terrible imprisonment, to become the happy mother of a young San Juanefio shortly afterwards.

The foregoing incidents relating to the disaster have been gathered from several of the oldest natives of San Juan, who agree substantially in narrating them. An attempt was made in the early sixties to rebuild the walls by means of adobes at which time the domes, or bovedas, that still remained over the transept were unfortunately blown down with gun-powder to give place to a wooden roof, but the rainy season set in just at the critical time when a temporary roof was hardly in place to protect the work, and it and much of the walls fell in one night. Its rebuilding was never again undertaken.

---

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Bells*

The Mission bells now hang in a bell-wall between the present chapel and the ruins of the

---

church, but this is not their original place, for at one time they swung high up in the tower which stood in front of the great church. The inscription on the largest one is as follows:

VIVA JESUS, SN VICENTE ADVON DE LOS  
RRS PS MIROS F VICTE FUSTR IF JN SN  
TIAGO, 1796

of which the translation is:

"Praised be Jesus, San Vicente. In honor of the Rev. Fathers, Ministers (of the Mission) Fray Vicente Fuster, and Fray Juan Santiago, 1796."

On the next largest:

"AVE MARIA PURISIMA ME FESIT RUE-  
LAS I ME YAMO S. JUAN, 1796."

And the translation:

"Hail Mary most pure. Ruelas made me, and my name is San Juan, 1796."

The larger of the other two bells has:

"Ave Maria Purisima, Sn Antonio, 1804."

Translation: "Hail Mary most pure, San Antonio 1804."

And the smallest one:

"Ave Maria Purisima San Rafael, 1804.

"Hail Mary most pure, San Rafael, 1804."

From the above inscriptions it is evident that these were not the original bells of the Mission, as the institution was carrying on its work many years before these dates, and the bell was a necessity in the daily regime, for all work, divine services,

1

meals and recreation were begun and ended at a signal from the bell. The bells buried by order of Father Lasuen in the Mision Vieja were either never found, which is the tradition at San Juan, or were afterwards lost, or were re-cast in the founding of other bells.

A bell, in Mission days, hung at the west end of the front corridor, where the outlines of a blocked-up gateway that once opened into the yard of the children's quarters may be made out.

Of the Mission bells there are many traditions known to all the older people of San Juan. One of these relates to the good old Padre, Fray José Zalvidea. Of all the mission padres, he more than the others, still survives in the living memory of the people, and his name is the "open sesame" to the treasure caves of local tradition.

Adhering to the ancient custom of his brethren, he always travelled afoot on his journeys to other Missions, or on calls to the sick. Once while returning from a visit to a rancheria in the north, the story runs, he was overtaken near El Toro, some twelve miles away, by the other padre of the Mission who rode in a carreta drawn by oxen. On being invited to get in and ride, he refused and answered pleasantly—

"Never mind, my brother, I shall arrive at the Mission before you to ring the Angelus."

The other Father, respecting Padre José's

---

desire to proceed afoot, did not urge him further, but continued on his way in the carreta.

Now, in those days El Camino Real came into San Juan from the north, not as it does now, along the level side of the Trabuco Valley, but some rods to the east, over the rolling breasts of the lomas. From the Mission patio one may still see the depression in the hill-top to the north-west of the Mission, where the roadway came over the swelling ground there, and gave the weary traveler from the north a first full view of the Mission. When the Father in the carreta reached this point on the King's Highway, it was just the hour for the Angelus, and promptly on the moment the bells rang out the three-fold call to prayer. Wondering who could have rung the Angelus in the absence of both Fathers, he hastened forward and found that Father Zalvidea, true to his word, had reached the Mission before him; but how he did so, to this day remains a mystery.

Another of the traditions is as follows: There lived with her parents near the Mission an Indian maid named Matilda who was very gentle and devout, and who loved to care for the sanctuary and to keep fresh flowers upon the altars. She took sick, however, and died just at the break of day. Immediately, in order to announce her departure, the four bells all began of their own accord, or rather, by the hands of angels, to ring together—

not merely the solemn tolling of the larger ones for an adult nor the joyful jingling of the two smaller ones for a child, but a mingling of the two ways, to proclaim both the years of her age and the innocence of her life. Some say it was not the sound of the Mission bells at all that was heard ringing down the little valley at dawn, but of the bells in heaven which rang out a welcome to her pure soul upon its entrance into the company of the angels.

---

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Patio*

The arch-lined quadrangle around which the mission buildings are clustered is commonly called the "patio" and such it was called by the padres in their reports to their superiors. But some of the old Indians that remain call it "La Plaza de la Mision" to distinguish it from "La Plaza del Pueblo", which formerly lay in front of the Mission. The latter is now partly built up with houses, which obliterate its character of a plaza. The area of the patio is just about one acre, each side measuring approximately two hundred feet. it is not a rectangle but a trapezium in shape, for no two sides are exactly parallel.

In mission days, one of its uses was that of an outdoor workshop for the Indians. Here the

---

blacksmith, the carpenter, the blanket-makers, the fruit-curers, and the atole grinders plied their respective trades. The Indians were children of the open air and the padres wisely provided for them an open-air workshop.

When the Mission passed out of the hands of the Franciscans, and was converted into a Parish Church, the patio became a kind of recreation ground for both the Indians and the other dwellers of the vicinity. In those days bull-fighting was one of the sports of the people, as it is to-day in Mexico and Spain. The bull-fight took place in the plaza of the town, within an enclosure surrounded by high stakes which were driven into the ground and bound together by means of rawhide strips. No bull-fight was ever carried on in the patio of the Mission. There was a kind of "Bull-game" conducted there, but the animal was never killed during the sport. The bull was admitted into the patio through the "Puerta Chiquita", or little gate, on the north side, with a purse of silver tied on his head between the horns. The object of the game was to seize and pull off the money, which became the prize of the lucky "toreador" who succeeded. Then the bull was driven out of the patio through the Saguan on the south, receiving a vigorous twist of the tail as he rushed through the passageway,—  
"lo corrieron coleandolo." During these games



the spectators crowded the roof of the corridor around the patio, whence they cheered in perfect safety the bull-fighters below.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

### *The Beginning and the End*

To one who visits the Mission and contemplates the majestic and extensive buildings, measuring a third of a mile around, and at the same time notes their ruined condition, two thoughts naturally occur. The first is: How did the padres manage, with their limited resources and untrained workmen, to accomplish so wonderful results in the building of the Mission in so short a time? And the second is: How did it come about that the place was left to fall to ruin—the padres gone, and the Indians for whom it had been built scattered to the four-winds or gathered to their fathers?

The answer to these questions is a long story. The up-building of the Missions was the result of the work of the Catholic Church in fulfillment of the duty imposed upon her by her divine Founder Jesus Christ, to "teach the gospel to every creature." The immediate agents of that teaching were the Fathers of the Franciscan Order, to whom had been committed the leadership in the work of taking

---

actual possession of California by Spain, which up to the year 1769 had only nominal possession of the country. To the unbounded enthusiasm, energy, genius, if you please, of Fray Junípero Serra and his companions is due the swiftness with which the peaceful conquest of the savage tribes was carried on.

The ruin of San Juan Capistrano and of the other Missions of California was due to the greed of the Mexican officials who under the hypocritical pretense of alleviating the condition of the Mission Indians brought about the confiscation of the Mission property by the territorial government of California. State officials replaced the padres and this resulted in a short time in the most shameful squandering of the properties and effects of the establishments, and in the scattering of the Indians. The following is from Alfred Robinson's "Life in California", published in 1846:

"For several years past a few evil minded persons have sought the ruin of the Missions in California, by dividing their possessions among the Indians. Various decrees had passed the Mexican Congress relative to their secularization, which were afterwards made null by counter resolutions.

The administration of Gomez Farias, as President of the Republic, was favorable to the plan, and the powerful influence of Padrés procured from His Excellency his sanction to an act of the Mexican

---

Congress, passed the 17th of August, 1833, entitled: 'An Act for the Secularization of the Missions of the Californias, etc.' "

San Juan Capistrano was the very first at which this act was put into effect. The administration of the mission passing from the Fathers into the hands of salaried state officials, it was only a short time before the lands and even the buildings themselves were sold off, and the Indians sent adrift. Some years later, 1862, smallpox appeared among them and almost entirely wiped them out of existence, so that to-day not half a dozen San Juanefios remain in the vicinity of the Mission.

The Mission is in ruins; the Indians are no more; the pious padres are long since gone to their reward. The world which loves the flesh and the pride of life says and believes that the work was a failure, but in a sense that the world does not and can not understand, the things they wrought will one day rise like a glorious sun over the ocean of eternity, while the work of the worldling, which is now so proudly held up for the admiration of his fellowman, will sink and disappear, like the sorry wreck of a ship, pounded to pieces on the treacherous rocks of time.

*The End*



The Present Chapel

# Mission San Juan Capistrano

founded  
1776

midway  
between  
Los Angeles  
& San Diego

The architectural gem  
of all the missions

San Juan  
Capistrano  
California







Roll

F 869 .S423 O81 C.1  
Little chapters about San Juan  
Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 036 380 744

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES  
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY  
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004  
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

28D FEB 4 1994  
FEB 22 1994



